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ACTION WHA-00

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	EB-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-00	NSAE-00	OIC-00
	OMB-00	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	PRM-00
	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	/000W			

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O 092057Z AUG 04  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7298  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY  
HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
USINT HAVANA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 002547

NSC FOR CBARTON  
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD  
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCHA/OTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2014  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, KDEM, VE  
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN REFERENDUM UPDATE: AUGUST 9

Classified By: Abelardo A. Arias, Political Counselor,  
for Reason 1.5(d)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL  
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 3 AUG 2019  
APPEAL ACTION: ORIGINAL DECISION UPHELD  
REASON(S): B1, 1.4(D)  
DATE/CASE ID: 11 OCT 2007 200404746

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Summary  
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1. (U) National Electoral Council (CNE) director Jorge Rodriguez and Valter Peclly Moreira, head of the Organization of American States (OAS) observation mission in Venezuela, told reporters the audit of 150 electronic voting machines on August 8 was a success. Also on August 8, Chavez supporters and opponents held large and peaceful campaign rallies in Caracas. Miranda State Governor Enrique Mendoza said the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E SINN  
DATE/CASE ID: 24 JUN 2005 200404746

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opposition Coordinadora Democratica would begin publicizing referendum result trends at 3 pm on August 15 and would continue with hourly updates. CNE director Rodriguez filed a criminal complaint charging that the opposition committed fraud in the November signature drive. The opposition primary to select an opposition presidential candidate now appears to be slated for September 5, according to Sumate.  
End Summary.

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**Audit Declared Successful**  
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2. (U) Jorge Rodriguez of the National Electoral Council (CNE) announced that the technical audit performed August 8 on 150 electronic voting machines was a success and had a zero percent error rate. Rodriguez declared the data transmission through the phone lines was also successful and had no inconsistencies. Valter Peclly Moreira, head of the Organization of American States (OAS) observation mission in Venezuela, told reporters that he was satisfied with the results of the audit. The technical teams from the opposition's Coordinadora Democratica and President Hugo Chavez's Comando Maisanta both withheld judgment, saying only that the process was not yet complete.

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**Rally Sunday**  
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3. (U) Chavez supporters and opponents held large and peaceful campaign rallies on August 8 in Caracas. Speaking at the "No" rally, President Chavez urged everyone to vote, and vote early, on August 15 regardless inconveniences like bad weather and lack of public transportation. Chavez denied there was any fear factor leading up to the referendum vote, saying that for the first time no one was afraid to say what he thought. Chavez said that the opposition had created the appearance of fear with the help of the media. Vice-president Jose Vincente Rangel declared the pro-GOV event a success, challenging the opposition to produce even one third as many supporters for a public gathering. The opposition held a concert/rally also attended by thousands at three points in the eastern part of Caracas. Speaking at the opposition's event, governor of Miranda state Enrique Mendoza, assured voters that a "Si" win was inevitable and urged voters to vote early to avoid any sabotage attempts by Chavistas. The Chavista University student federation sent 100 people to demonstrate peacefully outside the US Embassy August 8. The leader accused the US of sending troops to

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Venezuela. The DCM rejected this claim and stressed the US supported the referendum process.

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**Announcing Results**  
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4. (U) During the opposition rally on August 8, Miranda State Governor Enrique Mendoza announced the Coordinadora Democratica would begin publicizing referendum result trends at 3 pm on August 15 and would continue with hourly updates. He assured those at the event the decision did not violate the CNE agreement that only prohibits announcing numbers to the media. Mendoza said that the opposition would find a way

of legally informing the people early so Chavez and his supporters could not steal the vote. Rodriguez leveled personal attacks against Coordinadora Democratica leader Enrique Mendoza and Accion Democratica (AD) leader Henry Ramos for comments the two made questioning the objectivity of Rodriguez and the CNE. Vice-president Rangel told the assembled diplomatic corps on August 9 that the GOV would disrupt any television channel that would broadcast Mendoza's 3 pm update. The law, Rangel said, is clear. The election results may not be commented upon before the polls close.

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**Accusations**  
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5. (U) CNE Director Rodriguez presented a criminal complaint to the Attorney General's office alleging the opposition perpetrated fraud during the November 2003 signature drives to petition for the recall of President Chavez. Rodriguez claimed that the fingerprints of more than 10,000 people appear multiple times in the petition forms. Rodriguez claimed that the immigration office (ONIDEX) had matched some of the fingerprints with their records. A Chavez supporter appearing with Rodriguez at the Attorney General's office claimed the alleged fraud amounted to 250,000 - 300,000 bogus signatures.

6. (U) Rodriguez further suggested that a car fire in his sister's parking garage August 6 was purposefully set to intimidate him and his family. Coincidentally, authorities discovered a Smartmatic voting machine in the vehicle next to the one that burned. Smartmatic officials told the press the machine was in the rightful possession of Smartmatic's training coordinator for Caracas and that the machine carried only test software.

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Shapiro

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